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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 8397
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0177
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0157
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0158
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0172
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000163

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: PARTY CHAIR WARNS OF DETERIORATING SECURITY

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a February 21 meeting with Econoff, Democratic People,s Alliance (DPA) Chairman Chief Supo Shonibare said security in Lagos was getting worse as the political season progressed. He identified polling areas likely to be fraught with irregularities and marred by violence. Speaking of the Lagos gubernatorial race, Shonibare concluded the Action Congress (AC) was the likely winner in a genuine election. End summary.

Security Is Deteriorating

¶2. (SBU) In a February 21 meeting with Econoff, Democratic People,s Alliance (DPA) Chairman Chief Supo Shonibare said security in Lagos was deteriorating rapidly and was already worse than it was during the 2003 election. He recounted two incidents to illustrate this point. On February 16, while on the Third Mainland Bridge, Shonibare was attacked by an axe-wielding assailant, who shattered the passenger side window of Shonibare,s vehicle. Shonibare was able to escape unharmed thanks to his driver,s quick defensive reaction. The second incident involved the DPA deputy gubernatorial candidate, Kunle Lawal. That same week, Lawal,s car was riddled with bullets near his home. The gunmen attacked only the passenger side of the car - where Lawal usually sits, Shonibare said. Lawal was not in the car at that time. Lawal,s driver abandoned the vehicle, which was not subsequently touched by the assailants.

¶3. (SBU) When asked about the perpetrators, Shonibare said the assaults may have been a combination of politically-motivated attacks and random crime. If politically motivated, Shonibare said the sources of discontent were numerous and he could not precisely identify who may have approved the attacks. What this illustrated, he explained, was an increasingly threatening political environment. As a result, Shonibare said he would travel with extra security.

Polling Locations Are Likely Sites Of Conflict

14. (SBU) Lagos State will have roughly 7,950 polling sites, observed Shonibare. All parties with candidates in the election planned to have a representative at each location on election day. But, he said, this would prove a significant burden for parties whose finances are thin. Complicating matters, Shonibare reflected, was that observers employed by political parties were susceptible to financial "inducements" by wealthier rival parties. This was especially the case in rural areas, where people were not as familiar with their rights and where a relatively small amount of money can look like a king's ransom, he explained.

15. (SBU) Shonibare enumerated the locations where he felt observers were needed. These included Alimosho, Kosofe, Lagos Island, Eti-Osa, Mushin, Shomolu, and Lagos Mainland. Mushin and Shomolu were sites of violent clashes in the 2003 election, and Shonibare expected these events would be repeated in the coming months. In addition, he said, Eti-Osa was marred by blatant vote manipulation, as the local chiefs returned more ballots than there were voters registered in that locale.

DPA Party Chair Predicts AC Victory; More Of The Same

16. (SBU) The AC would almost certainly beat the PDP in the Lagos gubernatorial elections, Shonibare predicted. People were frustrated with President Obasanjo's blatant attempts to control the presidential and gubernatorial elections and would express their frustration at the ballot box, he concluded.

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17. (C) Evaluating the PDP and AC gubernatorial candidates, Shonibare said PDP candidate Musiliu Obanikoro lacked the intellectual capacity to govern Lagos. While AC candidate Babatunde Fasola was better equipped, he also was perceived as a marionette controlled by Governor Tinubu for the prime objective of covering Governor Tinubu's tracks once Tinubu left office, Shonibare complained. As Tinubu's Chief of Staff, Fasola would have been involved in mismanagement of public funds and thus would have a difficult time distancing himself from Tinubu upon assuming office, Shonibare calculated. In addition, Shonibare believed Fasola and Tinubu are relatives.

18. (C) Tinubu's government was marked with corruption, Shonibare alleged, and noted three incidents of which he had specific knowledge where Tinubu had taken bribes in exchange for construction permits. While Tinubu was more discreet than other governors in his misdeeds, he was among the richest, Shonibare said. It was Tinubu's personal coffers that funded the AC, he continued. Shonibare said the PDP and AC were two sides of the same coin, both corrupt and unlikely to address Lagos's problems.

Comment

19. (C) Comment: Shonibare is a member of the established Yoruba elite. He is educated and reserved - two things which the leadership the AC and PDP in the Southwest do not have in ample supply. Shonibare's comments are those of a member of an elite that is witnessing the continued erosion of its political status. In its place comes a more aggressive, less refined political machinery. Either way you look at it, should the PDP or AC capture the gubernatorial seat, the Yoruba establishment will suffer another stroke to its

political fortune as the candidates of these parties represent the streets and not the comfortable parlors of Lagos.

¶10. (C) Comment continued: Shonibare is an ardent foe of Tinubu. Both were in the AD together. But in the power struggle that the AD became, each man ended up as a leader in opposing factions. Neither has much good to say about the other. However, Shonibare's criticism of Tinubu's selection has resonance with many Lagosians, including some in Tinubu's own camp. End comment.

BROWNE